

PROSPERITY & MISFORTUNE



An Historical Sketch
of the

ATNO / Casterline Family
on the
MORRIS CANAL



in
Rockaway
Morris County
New Jersey

Greg Casterline
1999

H
929
Atno

12/22/99
Gift from
Greg Easterline

. CONTENTS .

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Portrait

1

Ancestry

2 - 4

History

5 - 10

Prosperity

11 - 22

Misfortune

23 - 36

Tribute

37

resources

PORTRAIT



JACOB and NANCY ELIZABETH (Casterline) ATNO

Their portrait hangs in my dining room and is a daily reminder of my family's early settlement in Rockaway Township, Morris County, New Jersey over 300 years ago. It is a charcoal replica of an 1850's daguerreotype (early form of photography) which was also lucky enough to have survived the years. Together they are cherished for putting faces on a couple of my ancestral names. Recently, these items became even more significant as I learned new information about Jacob and Nancy's lives.

Throughout the 1960's and '70's their portrait hung in my father's home office in Dover, N. J. I always remember referring to them as Jacob and Nancy. However, I just assumed that their last name was Casterline. This perception was aided by the fact that my father remembered oral tradition about a Casterline who had gone to California in the late 1840's - early 1850's as a 'miner 49er,' which approximates the period when daguerreotypes were popular. It wasn't until 1997, when I began researching documentation, that I learned their true identity. Obviously, it was surprising, but not disappointing, since so much about who they really were was available. For instance, Nancy Elizabeth represents the 5th generation of Casterlines to inhabit Rockaway, according to our family's oral tradition documented in J. P. Crayons 1902 book, *ROCKAWAY RECORDS of Morris County, N. J. Families*.

Two of the knowledgeable and generous people who helped direct my research were the late Bill Monroe, a local historian associated with the Rockaway Presbyterian Church, and Jim Lee, author of several Morris Canal books. This presentation is dedicated to them and their passion for history which motivated me to share the Atno's story. *Enjoy!*

ANCESTRY



JACOB ATNO

Was the 9th child of Henry Sr. (b. Oct. 15, 1777, d. Mar. 8, 1840) and Sarah (Sherman) Atno (b. Jan. 27, 1784, d. Feb. 9, 1846); married on June 9, 1801 and had twelve children.

Benjamin Knap Atno b. March 23, 1802

David Atno b. July 27, 1804, died Sept. 22, 1804

David C. Atno b. December 15, 1805, died unmarried Sept. 27, 1840

Elizabeth Atno b. Oct. 4, 1807, died Oct. 14, 1807

Evaline Atno b. Oct. 9, 1809, m. May 22, 1834-Simeon L. Casterline (*Nancy's uncle*) d. Sept. 30, 1838

Mary Atno b. Sept. 6, 1812, m. William D. Tolbert

Aaron A. Atno b. May 15, 1815, m. Harriet M. Connet

Henry Atno Jr. b. Dec. 9, 1817, m. Nov. 9, 1842-Elizabeth Day

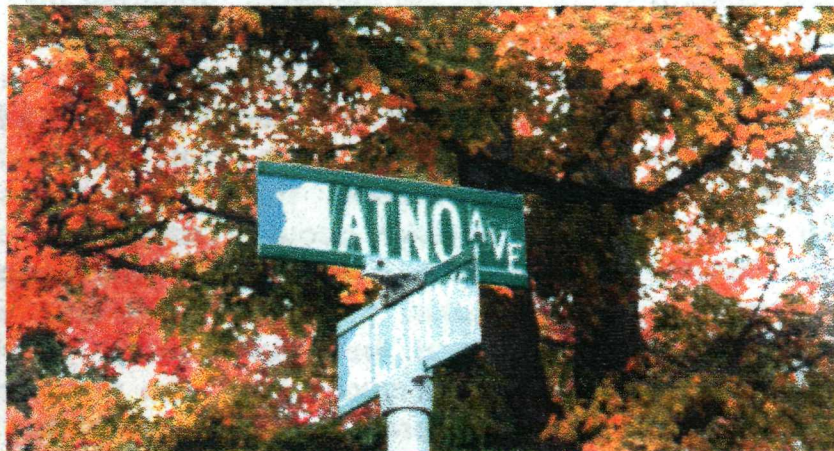
JACOB ATNO b. May 13, 1820, m. **NANCY E. CASTERLINE**, d. July 6, 1886

Sherwood Sherman Atno b. Aug. 18, 1822, m. Jan. 22, 1845-Anna Christina Rekum

Charles Atno b. March 24, 1824, m. March 25, 1850-Julia Vail Johnson

William E. Atno b. Oct. 5, 1827, m. May 1, 1862-Eliza M. Gray, d. May 3, 1873

Jacob's brother Sherwood was a councilman in Morristown in 1865 & '66 as well as a leather manufacturer in that town for over 30 years. Sherwood's son Francis was also the town clerk & treasurer in 1871 & '72 and became a lawyer in 1873 (one of his later assignments that year was a difficult one, as noted further on). Likely due to their early presence in Morristown, a street was named for their family.



NANCY ELIZABETH (Casterline) ATNO

Was the GG-granddaughter of FRANCIS (b. 1672, d. Dec. 12, 1768 - at 96) and Phebe Catterling. J. P. Crayon's 1902 book, states :

The Casterline Family.

There is tradition handed down in the family, that Francis Casterline settled near Franklin or Union, when his son Francis was a babe and carried in his mother's arms.and the child Francis died 1796 at the age of 106 years, placing date of settlement at 1690, ...

Francis was later listed as an early 18th century freeholder in Morris Twp., Morris County as well as in the *Minute Book* of that twp. for his earmarks (brands for farm animals). His will, which is an early British Colonial Document, states he later farmed in Morristown - owning abt. 25 acres. *The Bill Of Mortality* states he died of old age and is likely buried in the 1st. Presbyterian Ch. of Morristown Cemetery. Children : sons - *Francis Jr.*, Isaac, James, Joseph, Benjamin, Jacob, daughters - Phebe, Susanah, Mary and Martha.

Was the G-granddaughter of FRANCIS CATERLIN JR. (b. abt. 1690, died abt. 1796 - at 106) and unknown wife. Along with his father, he too is listed as an early freeholder as well as for his earmarks. Oral tradition has him married three times with 26 children. There appears to be very little documentation on him, which seems a little unusual given he was a Centenarian. Children known : sons - Abraham, Amariah, Benjamin, *Joseph*, Jacob, Stephen, Samuel, James, and Francis III, daughter - Phebe.

Was the granddaughter of JOSEPH (b. July 5, 1745, d. April 18, 1833 - at 87) and Susanah (Lyon) Casterline (d. abt. 1798). They were married on May 16, 1772 in the 1st. Presbyterian Ch. Morristown. Joseph served as a **Private** in the **Morris County, N.J. Militia** during the **Revolutionary War** for **18 months** over the five year period **1775 - 1780**. He served under both **Capt. Josiah Hall** and **Gen. William Winds of Rockaway**. This information came from his **Rev. War Pension Application** which was a *signed* affidavit of his tours of duty. Six of his siblings also served. Joseph was also listed in the *N. J. Tax Lists 1772-1822*, starting in 1783, as an ongoing resident of Hanover, Twp. - Union Hill section of Rockaway Twp. He also was an early pew holder of the 1st. Presbyterian Ch. of Rockaway in 1785. About 1816, he donated land and helped found the first school/church at Union Hill. Their children : sons - *Daniel*, Ezekiah, Levi, James, Joseph Jr., and *John*, daughters - Susan, Hannah, Sarah, Phebe, and Huldah. • Along with his second wife Penninah (Searing), he had a total of 21 children. He is likely buried in the cemetery of the 1st. Presbyterian Church of Rockaway where a monument honoring his military service was placed in 1999 - courtesy of the U. S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs & Bill Munroe of the cemetery committee.

Was the daughter of **DANIEL** (b. 1773, d. Jan. 7, 1863 - at 91, of old age) and Sarah Elizabeth (Carr) Casterline (b. 1772, d. March 16, 1866 - at 94, of old age). They initially lived in Morristown but later lived and farmed on Union Hill in Rockaway, N. J. Daniel is listed in the *N. J. Tax Lists 1772-1822*, starting in 1795, as an ongoing resident of Hanover Twp., Union Hill section of Rockaway. They are likely buried in the cemetery of the 1st. Presbyterian Ch. of Rockaway. Their children : sons Joseph, Albert, William H., Dennis and Elijah, daughters - Ellen, Susan, and **NANCY ELIZABETH**.

As noted earlier Nancy is part of a family that has lived in Morris County for over 300 years. Accordingly, they were honored by having **CASTERLINE ROAD** named for their long standing presence in the Union Hill / Openaki Lake area. The road begins at the south side of the lake, in what is now Denville Twp., and goes to the top of the hill. It was formerly part of the old road between Franklin and Morristown before the Revolutionary War. Given the large number of Casterlines who lived in the area, you will also read later about another memorable one, who participated in what would become a very historical moment for the Morris Canal !



Both Nancy's branch of the family and mine originated on Union Hill. Her father **Daniel** and my GGG-grandfather **John** were brothers. I represent the 9th generation of the family - my children the 10th, with my youngest daughter **Sarah Elizabeth** b. Nov. 8, 1998 named in memory of Nancy's mother! We live in Belvidere, Warren County, N. J. which retains the feel of old rural Morris County.

HISTORY

The War of 1812 not only stressed our country's economy but severely limited importing and exporting. Therefore, manufacturing and interstate transportation were two significant issues of the day. One solution was on the horizon.

In 1822, when Jacob was just two and Nancy eight, George McCulloch was fishing on Lake Hopatcong and contemplating the possibility of a canal stretching from east to west across N. J. George was born in Bombay, India, was educated in Scotland, and emigrated to Morris County by 1810. He built a beautiful mansion and school in Morristown, but by 1825 had turned his attention to the first 30 miles of the Morris Canal which was then under construction.

The first four miles of the canal to be completed were between Dover and Rockaway. Barbara Kalata's book, *One Hundred Years One Hundred Miles*, New Jersey's Morris Canal notes :

A short stretch of canal could be - and was - built first of all to conduct water from the river at Dover to the head of the inclined plane at Rockaway. It was this 4-mile stretch of canal that was navigable before July 10, 1826, when Macculloch wrote his report on the canal. He mentioned 'sailing' along that section at the very outset of his report. Yet water wasn't the principal reason for choosing Rockaway for that plane; 'Iron' was. At the Dover end of that 4-mile canal was the firm of Blackwell and McFarlan, iron manufacturers; at the Rockaway end were the rolling mill and forge of Colonel Joseph Jackson. And Henry McFarlan was a director of the Morris Canal and Banking Company.

Not only did the canal speed the transportation of heavy loads, but it allowed wider markets for the products being shipped. This meant emerging prosperity for those using it. Real estate values along the canal also soared. Munsell notes the importance of its existence for Rockaway :

The Morris Canal, passing through Rockaway, and in fact traveling the whole township, from Powerville on the east to the John Dickerson farm on the west, was the making of Rockaway village. This is admitted by all who knew the place prior to that time. Rockaway was the headquarters of the iron interests of the county. Its rich mineral productions and manufactured iron had a slow and expensive process of getting to market, and at this time Rockaway was in danger of being obliged to abandon one of its most extensive branches of industry for this reason. The canal was constructed as related on previous pages, and about 1830 became the only medium of transportation to and from Newark for all kinds of merchandise, and Rockaway was one of the many places benefited by it.

On November 4, 1831, after the cost of 2.1 million dollars, the first trip was taken across its 90 miles from the town of Phillipsburg in the west to Newark in the east. By 1836, the 12 mile Jersey City extension was completed, when Jacob was 16 and Nancy 22. The east to west passage now only took about 5 days, which far surpassed the use of wagons. The trip along the canal also rose about 914 feet above its lowest point using 23 inclined planes and 34 locks.

However, engineering this feat took a bit of effort, and Rockaway appeared to be the proving ground for the development of the plane, according to Munsell, which notes :

...The greatest difficulty experienced was the inclined planes, which were not in successful operation until many costly experiments were made. The first completed was at Rockaway, and passed a boat loaded with stone, computed to weigh fifteen tons, from the lower to the upper level, 52 feet, in twelve minutes. It was not considered complete either in mechanism or workmanship, and it was not till 1857 that the present plane was adopted there..

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A BIT OF HISTORY IN THE MAKING :

Q. Can anyone tell me when the first official trip was taken over Inclined Plane 6 East at Rockaway?

A. *It was actually taken in November of 1930.*

Q. Does anyone have an idea how many boats used the plane on that initial voyage?

A. *Four or five, and they were surrounded by bystanders witnessing that historical moment.*

Q. Can anyone tell me which direction the canal boats went on the plane?

A. *They actually went down the plane headed East for Newark.*

Q. Can anyone guess what was aboard the first canal boat?

A. *About 12 1/2 tons of cargo plus an estimated 42 passengers.*

Q. Finally, can anyone venture a guess as to who captained the first boat down Plane 6 East at Rockaway?

A. *Captain **CASTERLINE** of the canal boat Easton of Dover !!!*

I thoroughly enjoyed stumbling across this piece of information while researching for this presentation. What a thrill to know that another one of my family members captained the lead boat on the maiden voyage over Plane 6 East ! At that time Jacob was just 10 and Nancy just 16.

Barbara Kalata's book provides an account of that day :

...(a) full and successful trial was made on the locks and inclined planes on the Morris Canal, between Dover and Newark, Five boats left Dover for Newark....laden with iron and ore, and passed the inclined planes with so much ease and facility that the concourse of people assembled on the occasion were fully satisfied of their superiority over locks for a great ascent in a canal. The first boat that passed the plane at Rockaway, was The Easton of Dover with a cargo of 12-1/2 tons, and 42 passengers. It passed in 15 minutes, a descent of 52 feet. The machinery, being new, a full force of power was not applied. The Dover of Dover with a cargo of 18 tons and several passengers, next passed in seven minutes, and the remaining boats in the same time.

...However, an advertisement in Newark's Sentinel of Freedom suggests a different date and lists only four boats :

Below note the names of the canal boats and their captains !



ARRIVED, at Newark from Dover, the following boats, with Iron and Iron Ore, consigned to Jonathan Cory,

Packet boat Dover, Capt. Bragnelle.

do. Newark, Wilmott.

do. Eagle, Morris.

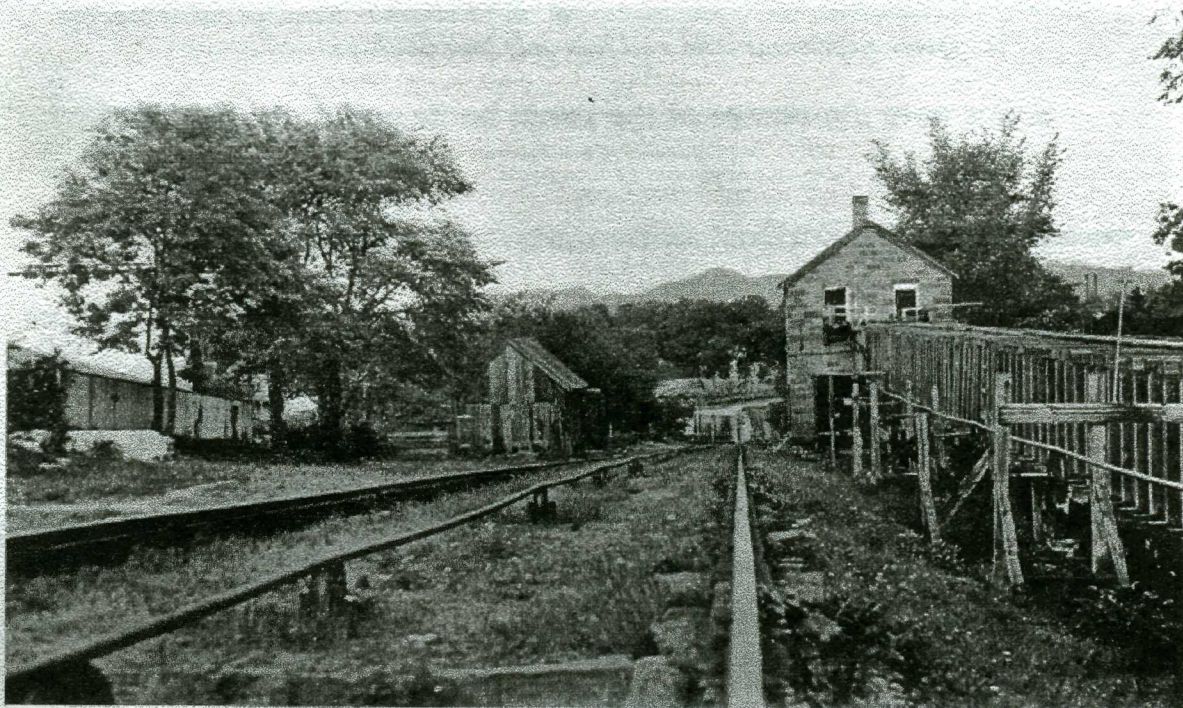
do. Easton, Casterline.

The above boats belong to Messrs. M'Farlane & Ayres, and are in charge of Mr. Elias Van Winkle, with 45 tons Iron Ore for Mr. Charles Stuart, Monmouth County, N.J. from the mine of Hon. Mahlon Dickerson, Suckasunny.

Newark, Nov. 15, 1830.

Pictured below is **Plane 6 East**. It offers you with the same view that Captain Casterline and his passengers enjoyed (minus the excited crowd). Looking down the incline to the east is the basin adjacent to Stickle's Lumber Yard on Union St. The structure on the right is the flume for the turbine in the attached power house. It operated the tow cable, resting on recessed pulleys, shown in the middle of the two rails.

MORRIS COUNTY



No. 36.

Plane 6 East, at Rockaway. To next lock west in Dover is $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles.

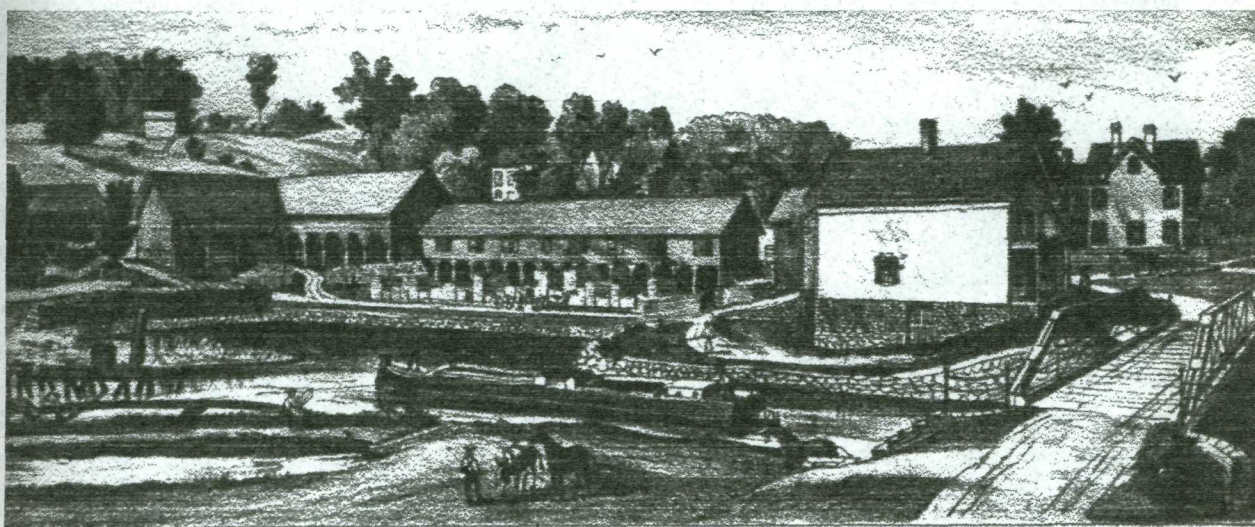
Roseville, 36 M.

v that Captain
Looking down
on Union St.
power house.
middle of the

As noted earlier, many technical changes were made during the development of the planes. Initially, they all used chains to raise and lower the cradles. However, the chain break at the Boonton plane in 1832, with Col. Jackson of Rockaway, his wife and two children plummeting down almost the entire plane, and then, plunging into the basin and over the embankment, brought about change. After some experiments with hemp Reobling's new cable technology became the tool of choice. The incident was recorded as follows :

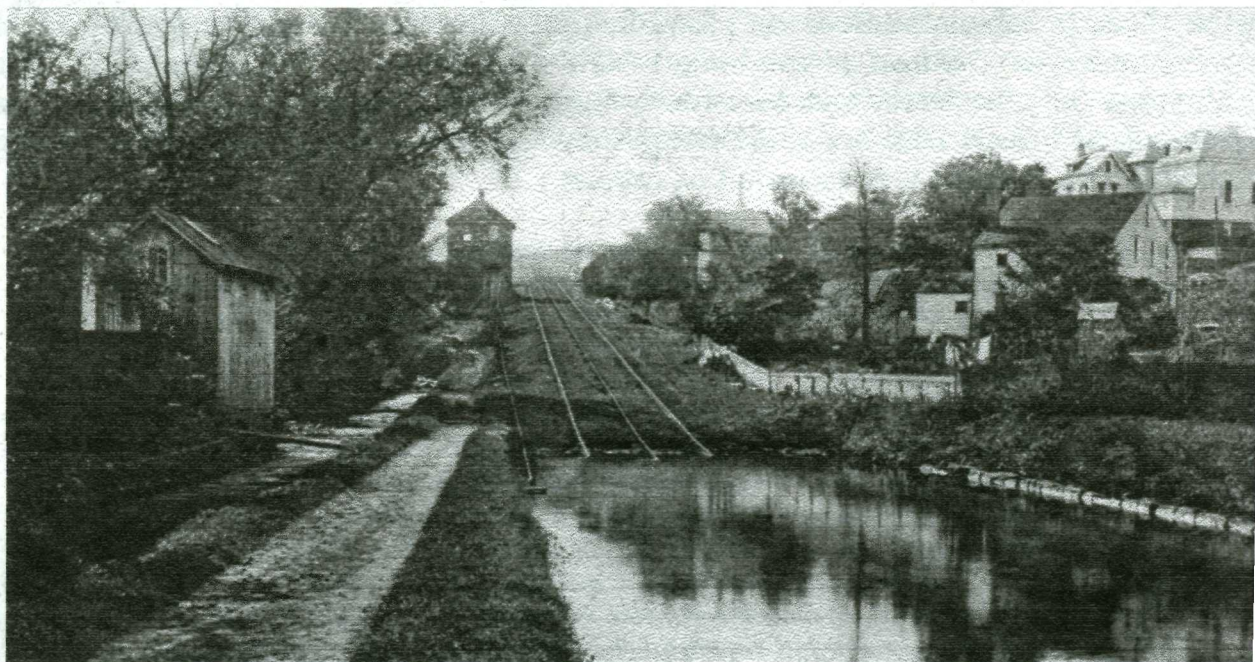
A boat called the ' Electra,' of Rockaway, owned by Col. Joseph Jackson, and partly loaded with merchant iron, was on its way to Newark, having on board the captain, his wife and two children. Just as the boat passed the summit the chain broke, and the car with the boat ran down with great velocity, striking the water with such force as to throw and immense wave over the towing path, which carried the boat with it down an embankment from 15 to 20 ft in height and landed it on the rocks below, amid some trees standing there, but fortunately without striking any. People hastened to the boat to ascertain the fate of those on board. On opening the cabin door, the wife with her two children, was found sitting there rather composedly, and uninjured. When told what had happened, she seemed surprised, and said she 'thought the boat went down very swift, but supposed that was the way the thing worked.

Diagonally across Union St. from Jackson's Forge was Stickle's Lumber Yard and residence located at the foot of **Plane 6**. They are pictured below at an early date - definitely before 1850. Their home is located in the far right corner. Observe the center of the picture where the canal boat is about to enter the cradle of the plane. Finally, notice the foreground of the picture showing an open area where canal boat mules are grazing, (This area becomes significant to the Atnos at a later date.)



LUMBER YARD OF B.K & B.W. STICKLE, ROCKAWAY, N.J.

RES. of B.K. STICKLE.



Pictured *above* is a view of **Plane 6 East** looking west toward the center town. *Below* is a small gang of swimmers enjoying the basin at Stickle's Lumb Yard adjacent to the plane. As a hint about the Atno's connection to the canal Rockaway, they surely would have heard the sounds from swimmers rather frequently.



PROSPERITY

Jacob was born in Stanhope on May 13, 1820. Nancy Elizabeth was born in Rockaway Twp. on September 6, 1814. They married at the ages of 20 & 26, respectively. *THE SENTINEL OF FREEDOM*, 8 Sept., 1840 stated:

In Hanover on Mon. evening Aug. 8, 1840 by John Garrigus Esq. Miss Nancy Elizabeth Casterline dau. of Daniel Casterline of Hanover to Jacob Atno of Drakesville.

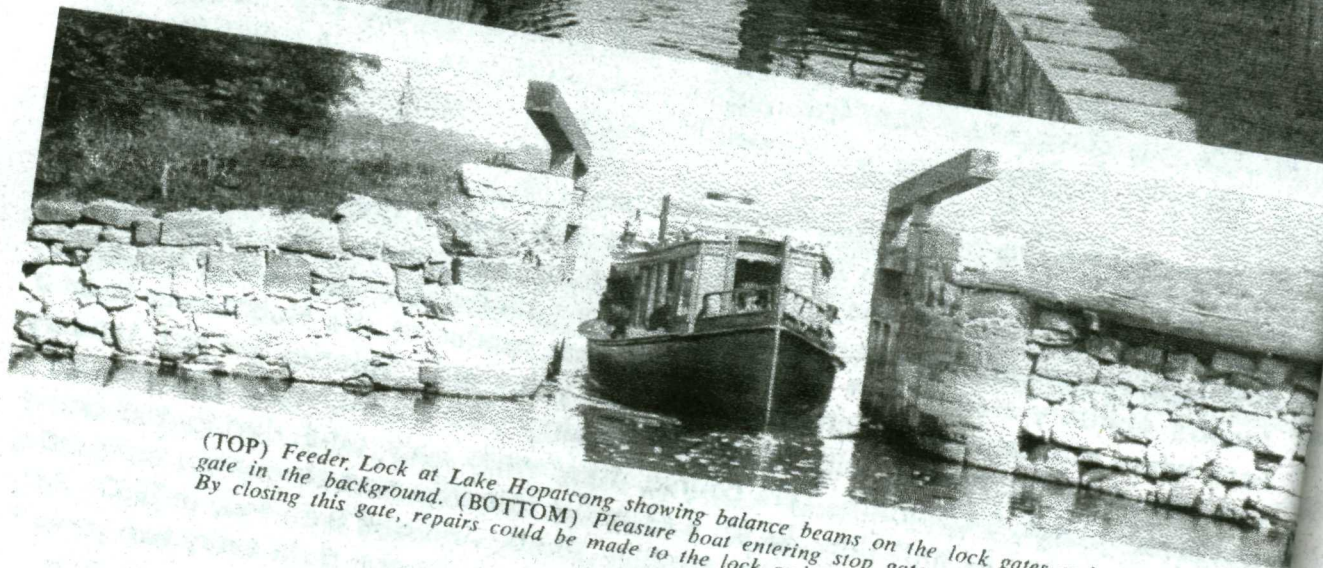
They initially lived in Roxbury Twp. - Drakesville (presently Ledgewood). The 1840 Census states they were involved in agricultural pursuits. By 1841 their first child Evaline was born. James followed in 1842 with Sarah E. in 1846 and Eugene in 1847.

The 1850 Census again shows them in Roxbury Twp. However, at some point in the late 40's - early '50's, the Atnos moved to Shippenport and then to Landing on Lake Hopatcong, both on the canal. Employment opportunities from building and maintaining the canal to operating it, while not glamorous, were rather abundant. Jacob's obituary stated that he became a lock tender at the Hopatcong Feeder Lock when the canal was only about 20 - 25 years old. Salaries for lock tenders was generally \$ 15/month with a handful making \$ 20 - \$ 30, while plane tenders pocketed about \$42/month. Of course, they were only paid during the active boating season. At that time Jacob was in his late 20's and Nancy her early 30's, and five more daughters joined the family - Phebe Ann and twin May in 1853, Mary in 1855, Isabella in 1856, and Lottie in 1857. That's about one child every two years !

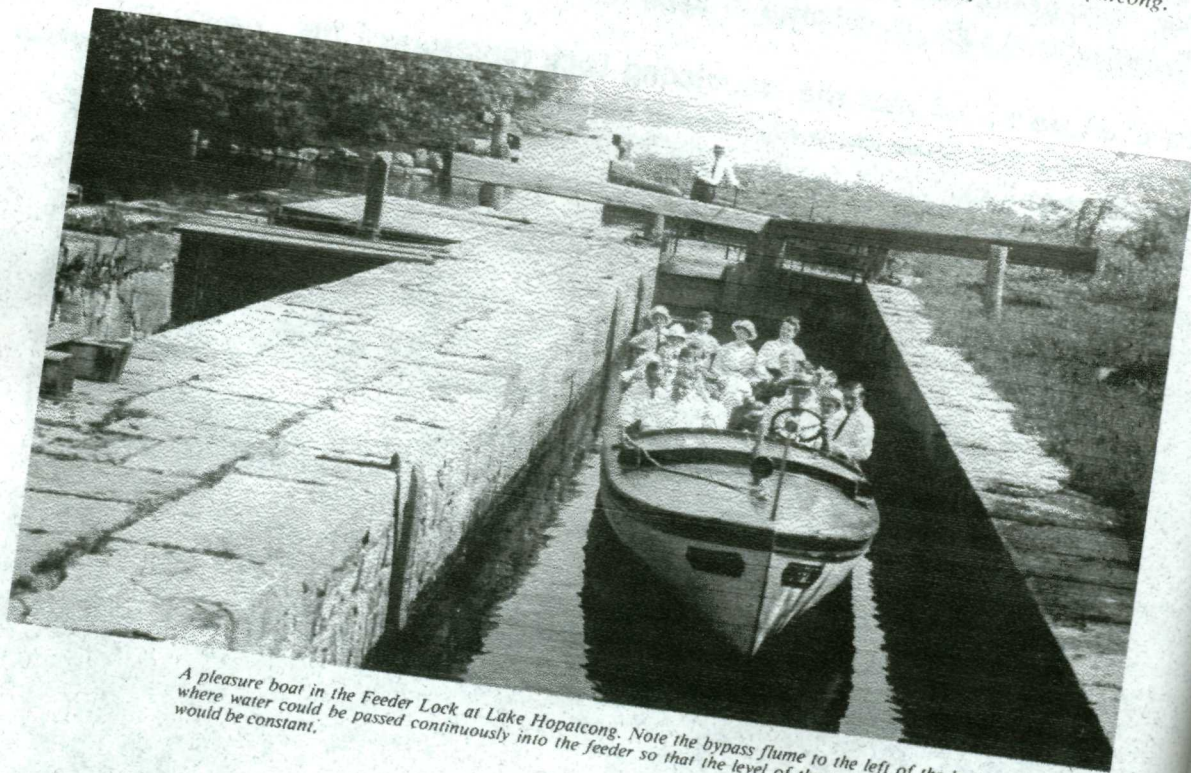
Jim Lee also noted that the Hopatcong Lock represented the, "summit level of the Morris Canal, 914 feet above mean high tide at Newark, New Jersey." Following are several pictures of that lock.




Looking under the bridge one sees "Brooklyn" Lock at Lake Hopatcong. The nickname Brooklyn from the Brooklyn Co.



(TOP) Feeder Lock at Lake Hopatcong showing balance beams on the lock gates and stop gate in the background. (BOTTOM) Pleasure boat entering stop gate at Lake Hopatcong. By closing this gate, repairs could be made to the lock and feeder canal.




A pleasure boat in the Feeder Lock at Lake Hopatcong. Note the bypass flume to the left of the lock where water could be passed continuously into the feeder so that the level of the main canal channel would be constant.




Also according to his obit, Jacob and Nancy removed to Rockaway in about 1856. They were married for 16 years, and he was in his mid 30's - she in her early 40's. The 1860 Census revealed that he was a laborer. However, his oldest son James became associated with the canal in the 1860's, and his daughter Sarah E. was married in 1865, to William Gill, a boatman on the canal owning his own canalboat/business valued at \$2,500. Jacob's role with the canal was also soon to change !

However, thirty years prior to their arrival in Rockaway, Col. Jackson, *"was virtually the sole owner of the town of Rockaway... and he was in an excellent position to benefit from its location (canal) at Rockaway,"* not to mention the business his forge must have had with the experimentation at the incline plane a short distance away. Therefore, It is not hard to believe that he actually advertised on July 4, 1827, in the *Paterson Intelligencer* for people to populate the tiny village. The paper read :



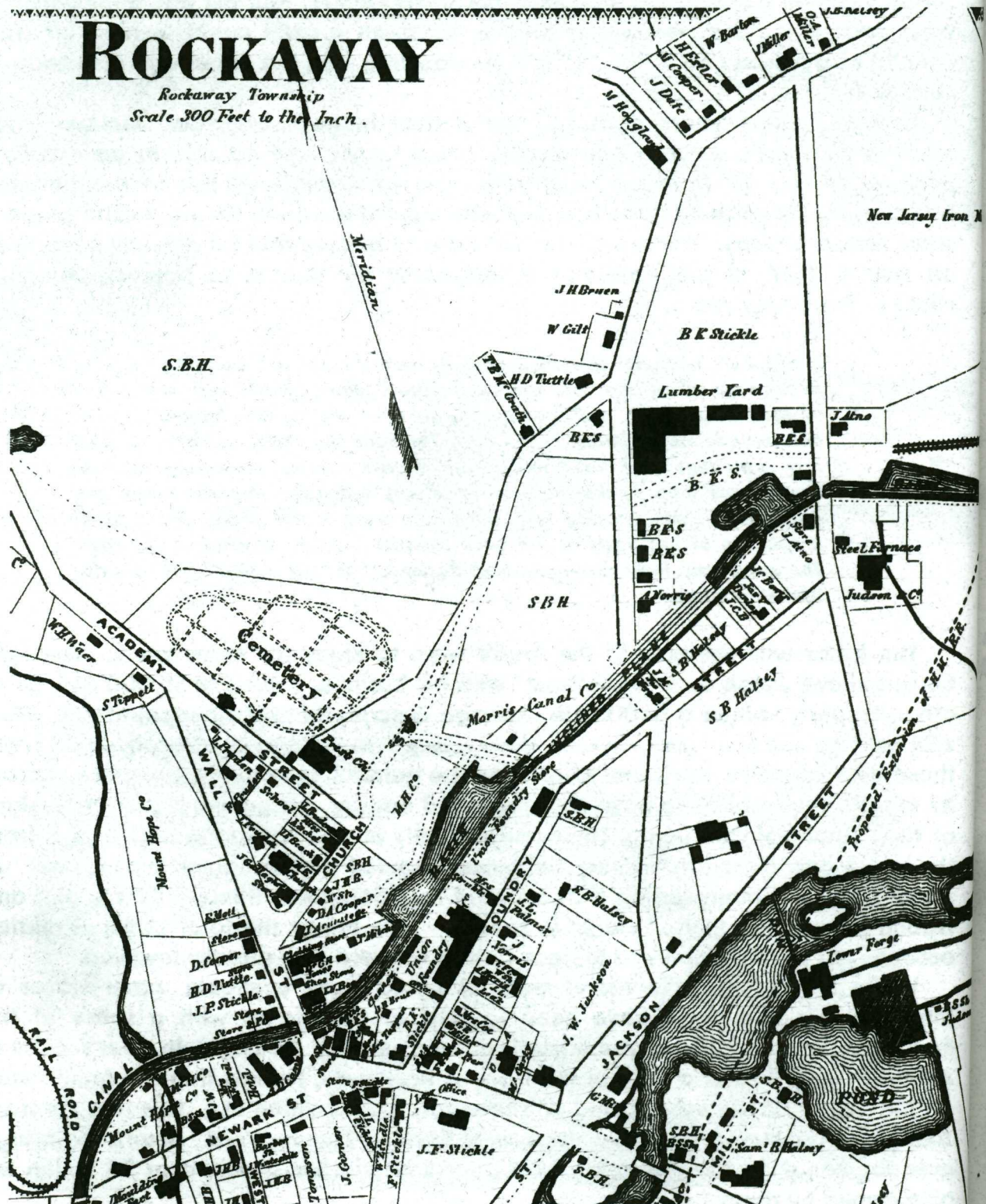
published Jackson's advertisement to sell 20 to 40 building lots in Rockaway, all at the foot of the inclined plane, where two basins had already been built, and 'another large one' was to be 'formed for the accommodation of boats.' Only 30 miles from New York, there were, 'very few situations on the line of the Morris Canal, possessing greater advantages than Rockaway, having a very extensive Manufacturing and Agricultural district laying {sic} north and west of this place, and a great proportion of the trade of the back counties will be directed to this spot.' The ad 'particularly recommended' Rockaway 'to the notice of Mechanics and Merchants.

The latter was the benefit the Atno's were to enjoy for many years. The 1870 Census shows Jacob as a *" Merchant "* with his business valued at \$5,000 as well as other property valued a \$400. He was also described in the newspaper *THE IRON ERA* as : *" a well to do store keeper in Morris county."* Merchants like Jacob, who served those who operated the canal boats and the general community, prospered across its length. Their ability to have a portrait and daguerreotype were also small signs of their financial well being. Their entire family also benefited in many ways from the canal and the store. While the census showed that daughter Evaline was *' at home '* with her mom Nancy, it also stated that daughters Pheobe (18 yrs. old) and Isabell (16 yrs. old) were, *' clerks in store '*. This brings the total of canal related occupations in their family to 5, since both boys were also directly involved.



While I truly wish the Atno's account books were available, other traces of information about them have been located to provide us with a sense of the Rockaway area and times when they lived and worked. To begin, in *Beer's Atlas of Morris County - 1868*, a map of the town of Rockaway, reveals that the Atno's store on the Morris Canal was located on the empty lot (13 Union St.). This was *formerly that grazing area in the earlier picture of Stickle's Lumber Yard*. Across the bridge over the canal on the right side of the road is another structure at 34 Union St., also owned by them.

Their properites are located on the right side of the page below which comes from the Beer's Atlas depicting the Town of Rockaway. Just look at the base of the plane across from Stickle's Lumbar Yard.



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of the

In 1986, the Morris County Historic Commission registered these sites as their canal store and home, respectively - Site Inventory # 1434 - 22 (pictured below).



Their vernacular Greek Revival style home to this day represents a beautiful example of early architecture and skilled craftsmanship.

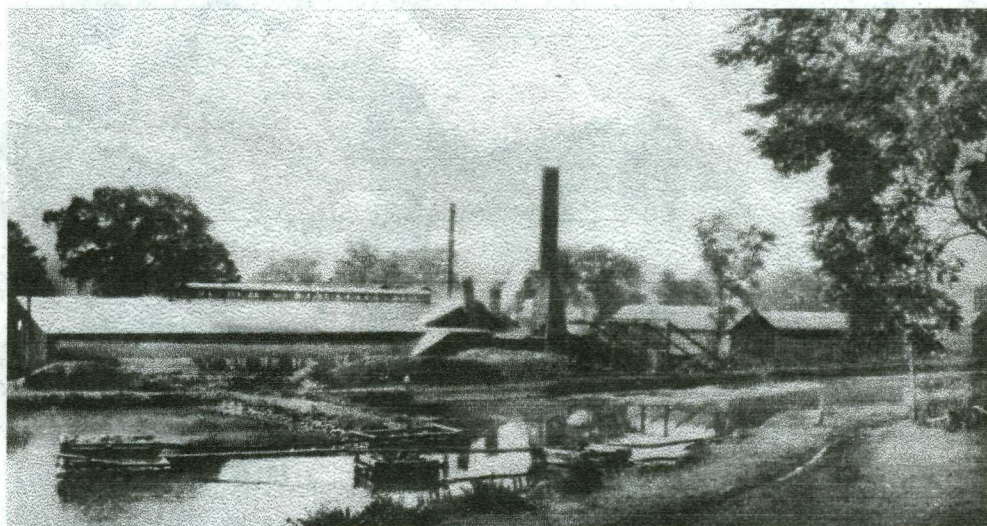


Below is a picture of **Plane 6 East** looking west toward the present center of town. The canal boat shown had just floated free of the cradle that brought it down the plane, and the mules, which were adjacent to the Atno's store, were about to take up the slack in the tow rope. Just to the right of the boat is a breakwater which helped direct boats going west into the cradle. Also present is a large hitching post which allowed an approaching boat to wait its turn at the plane or possibly stop off at Atno's Canal Store! From a mileage standpoint **Plane 6 East** was almost at the halfway marker on the canal - mi 52 of 102.



At the top of the plane was the Morris Canal Company Office which was across from the Union Foundry pictured below. Jim Lee's book, *The Morris Canal*, *Photographic History* notes :

The Union Foundry and Machine Shop at Rockaway, located at the top of Plane 6 East. This foundry, managed by the Hoagland family who were long time residents of Rockaway, was a good customer for the canal company, receiving shipments of coal and shipping its finished iron products on the canal.



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As noted earlier, Jacob and Nancy's prosperity also included the birth of two sons and seven daughters. Life near the canal had its benefits, especially for those who actively took advantage of all its opportunities. In Lee's books he speaks of the close relationships between business people and canal boat operators, etc. Sometimes entire families lived on the boats while others tended to locks from their lock tender's home. Children also enjoyed the benefits of their proximity to the canal by swimming, fishing, skating, etc. The Atno children likely enjoyed growing up near the canal and Lake Hopatcong, and they surely had their moments enjoying the nice hole (basin) across from their home in Rockaway!

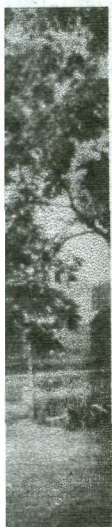
The family's proximity to the canal certainly had other effects on young James who was listed as a " *Boatman* " in the 1860 Census. Additionally in 1862, Capt. Atno at 20 years old was waylaid by a flood which caused a breach in the canal. Below is an account from Barbara Kalata's book as well as two pictures of the store noted therein :

...At Cherry Tree Bend, Port Murray, for example, Beatty's Creek, which flowed under the canal through a culvert, was so swollen 'late in the spring of 1862, after weeks of heavy rain' that it 'became a veritable torrent and the water rushing down the ravine undermined the wall of the culvert.' The creek washed away the canal's underpinnings... For three weeks, night and day, the company worked to repair the break.

Mr. Perry, a storekeeper at Port Murray, recorded such a breach in his 'day book' under the date of July 11, 1862, when six boats and their crews were held up and were 'laying at break,' the break being the canal washout. Perry extended credit to boatmen 'Campbell, Dempsey, Godfrey, Atno, Newman, and Quacho' to buy provisions from his store while they were idled at the break.

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Morris Canal, A

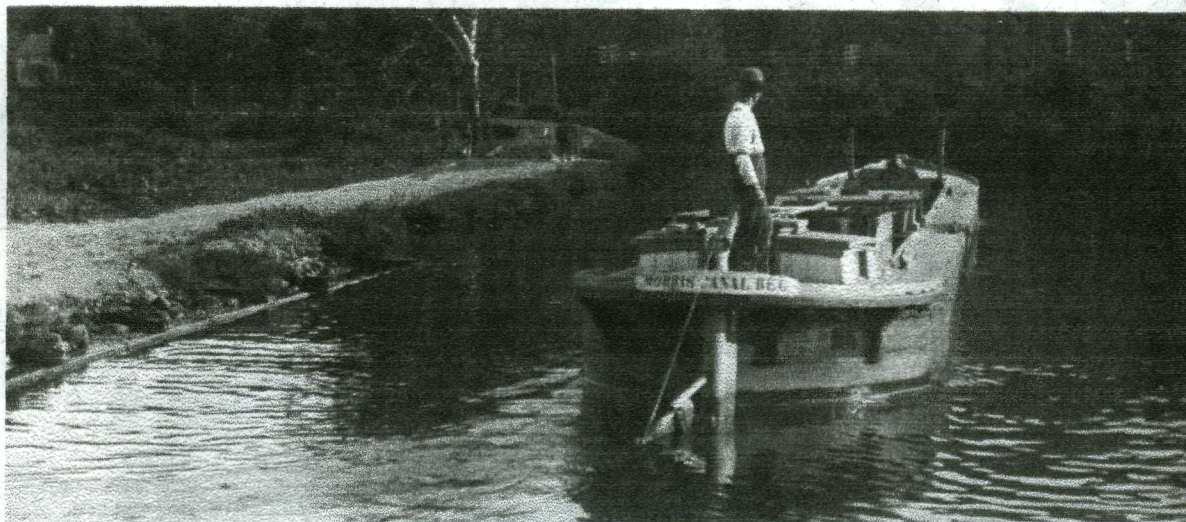
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In May of 1999 my wife and I enjoyed a tour of the canal in Warren Co sponsored by our culture and heritage commission. One of the stops was the former Perry store - pictured below. Behind it was a small intact section of the canal and Cherry Tree Bend Road.



On to younger brother Eugene who was not to be out boated by James, since the 1870 Census showed that he too became a "Boatman". As a matter of fact he became the *Captain* of his *own* canal boat the *Hugh Cassidy* at 23 years old. James was then listed as a "Blacksmith" likely somehow connected to the canal. At that time, the canal was waning from its hey day at 40 years old. Below is a picture of what Eugene, and earlier James would have looked like as a captain at the rudder with the driver walking the mules.



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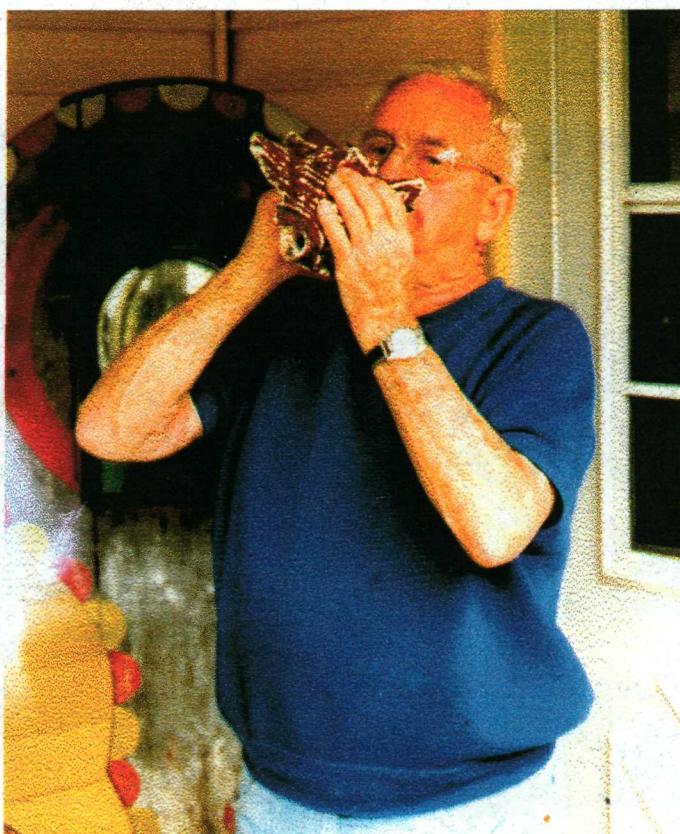
On June 12, 1999, the Canal Society of New Jersey celebrated its 30th Anniversary with a canal boat ride on the Waterloo Village section of the Morris Canal. Below are shots of that living history event which gave us the opportunity to appreciate a small sense of Eugene and James' life on the canal. Top - a mule pulls our canal boat. Bottom - my daughter Sarah Elizabeth and I get a close up view of one of the workers.



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23 years
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d. Below
a captain



Jim Lee (pictured below at his home - Plane 9 West) demonstrates the protocol for approaching a lock or plane. He is using one of the most popular horns of the day which was a modified conch shell. Other instruments such as bugles were also used when they could be afforded. The canal boat captain would announce his arrival within 1/4 mile of either site or face a fine for failing to do so.

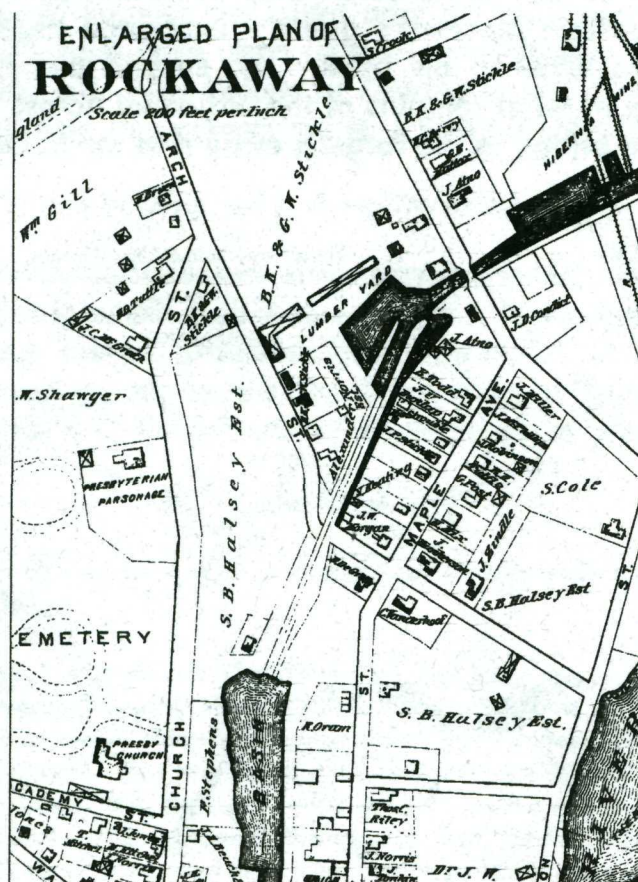


The boating season that Eugene and James faced each year started and ended dependent upon ice forming on the canal - typically March into December. At the end of their 20 mile day, they lived in a 10 x 10 cabin in the stern of the boat which may have had a stove but likely had no ice box. They resupplied along the route at canal stores like Eugene's parents. I surely wonder if they received a *discount* from them ! I also wonder if they had a special way of announcing their arrival once approaching the family store !!

Lee's book also revealed that the canal boats required at least a year of maintenance. This consisted of caulking and tarring. The repairs of other structural items that were not emergencies were attended to periodically. In spite of this, all the boats carried a bilge pump to keep the seeping water at bay, especially since they now were able to carry 70 to 75 tons of cargo - up from 25 in the early days when Capt. Casterline began working.

As noted earlier, the prosperous times for the canal were especially evident in the 1860's, during the Civil War. By then George McCulloch had divested himself from the 'financiers' who were involved in profiteering/stock speculating which resulted in the default of the canal mortgage. After Jacob and Nancy had been married about four years, and he was likely working the Hopatcong Lock, the new canal owners Williamson, Whitehead and Bryant secured control in 1844.

By 1871, the canal was leased to its final operator, the Lehigh Valley Railroad Co. Its prosperity began to wane in the 1880's, since the railroads had overtaken it as the front runner in the transportation business. The 1880 Census showed that Jacob was still a merchant with Peobe still clerking. James returned to the canal and was again described as a " *Boatman* ". However, prior to 1880, Eugene's experience on the canal had turned harrowing. Furthermore, In 1886, Jacob died from a stroke. However, Nancy appeared to still be operating their store in the mid 1880's as noted in Robinson's Atlas of M. C. - 1887 showing them in the same location.



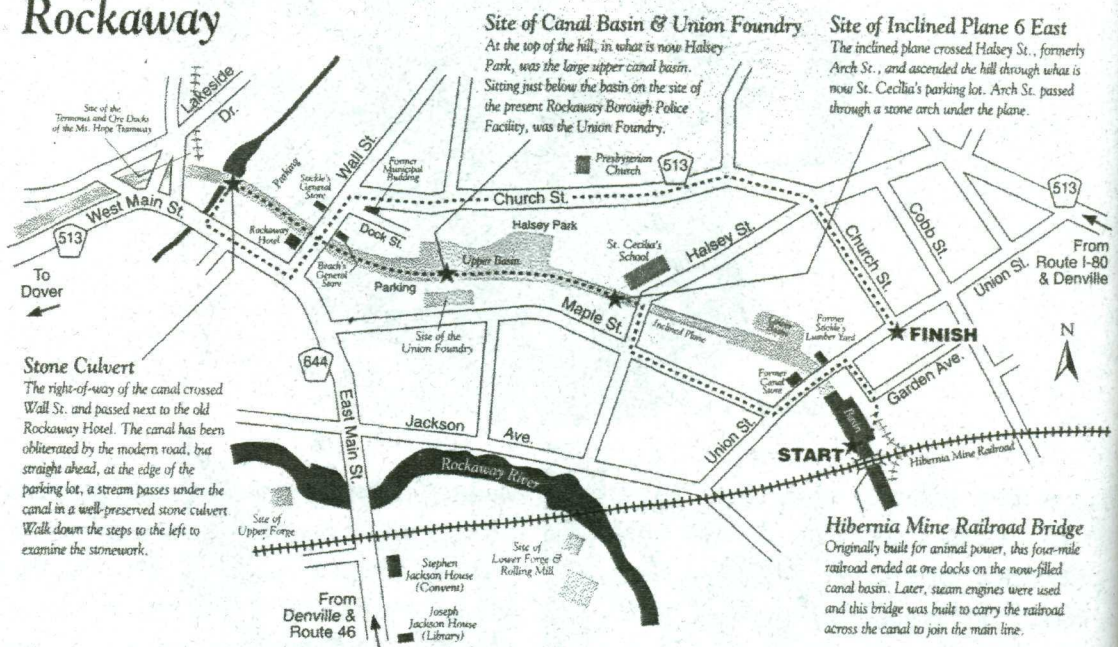
Below is a sampling of the coins of the period which provides another interesting view into the past. These were everyday sights for all of the Atnos, especially in the store - Indian Head Penny, Shielded Nickel & Seated Dime.



While some parts of the canal remained active, it was no longer being used over its entire length shortly thereafter. Jim Lee noted that he found the last bill of lading for shipping in 1915, although people have stated it was still in use in the early '20's. He added that in order for the canal to keep its charter, "crazy liners" made a round trip at least once a year to show it still could be accomplished. However, in 1922 the state legislature approved an act to assist in the transfer of the canal to the State of N. J. for abandonment and sale. By 1924 it was officially abandoned. Technology caught up with everyone associated with its existence. We can surely relate to that today.

A walking tour of the Morris Canal area in Rockaway can still be made today with the help of Joseph Macasek's guide - excerpted below! Several Rockaway landmarks are also listed in his book. The second picture is of my son Aaron Casterline standing by what remains of the old canal across from the Attno's former store. The old train bridge to the forge is evident in the background.

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Eugene Atno at Rockaway, Cpt. of canal boat on Morris Canal murdered, son of Jacob Atno.

Murder of a Morris County Man - Eugene Atmo, captain of a canal boat on the Morris Canal, was killed Tuesday afternoon, by being struck on the head by a bar of iron, by Thomas Findley the tender of the lock at the Hackensack Bridge. The murdered man was passing through the lock on his canal boat, when the current, which at that point is very swift, drove it against the pier. This enraged Findley, the lock tender, who attacked Atmo with a short bar of iron, and dealt him a savage blow upon the head behind the ear felling him to the ground. The injured man managed to regain his footing, when the murderer threw away his weapon, attacked his victim with his fists, and knocked him down. One of the boat hands seeing that Atmo was injured sprang upon the pier and endeavored to revive him, but he was beyond all aid, and died a few minutes afterwards.

A messenger went to Newark to inform the brother-in-law of the deceased of the the occurrence, and then the later at one left for the scene of the murder, and then visited Jersey City and informed the authorities of what had taken place. Officers were at once dispatched to the lock, and on their arrival arrested Findley, and a man named Dempsey as an accomplice.

The deceased is the son of Mr. Jacob Atno of Rockaway, and is said to have been a quiet and peaceable man. He was about twenty two years of age. Findley, the murderer, is a large and powerful built man, and is said to be a brutal ruffian, who has long been the terror of all the boatmen who pass through his lock.

The Hackettstown Gazette, July 19, 1873 had this account of the incident :

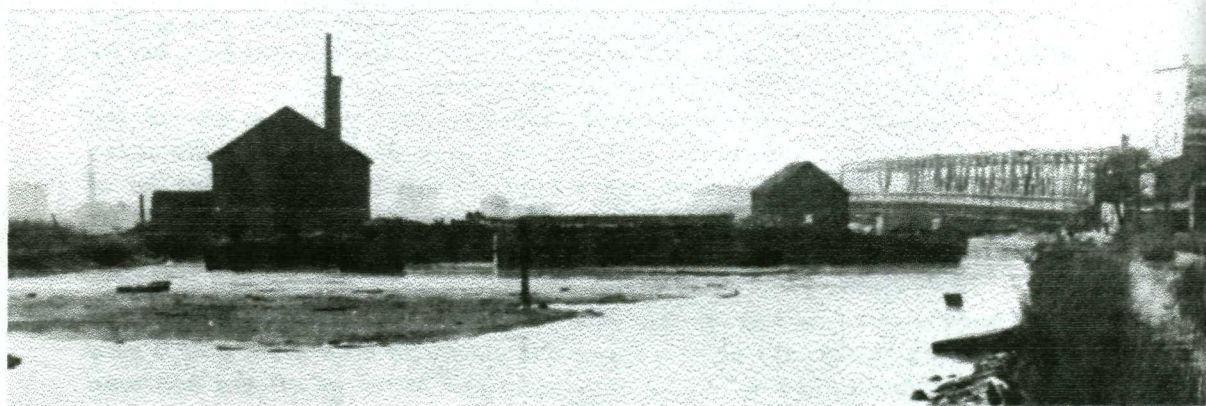
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On Tuesday a quarrel occurred at the plank bridge over the Hackensack River, between Captain Eugene Atno of the canal boat Hugh Cassidy, and Thos. Finn, the ferry master. Words led to blows, and in the fight Atno received a blow to the neck that killed him. Finn exhibited great grief and remorse at the fatal result of the blow, and went to Jersey City and gave himself up. Atno was from Rockaway, Morris County, about 24 yrs. of age, and fortunately unmarried.

The *EASTON DAILY EXPRESS, Thursday Evening, July 17, 1873*, which is my present day local paper, had this account of the incident. The story must have been noteworthy for this paper which served the Phillipsburg area - the western end of the canal. As you will read, the tragedy was two-fold in that it had its affects on Thomas Findley as well.

MURDER - On Thursday afternoon Eugene Atno, captain of a canal boat on the Morris Canal, was struck by Thomas Finn, the lock tender at the Hackensack ferry on the canal, and almost instantly killed by the blow. The cause of the affray was a difficulty about precedence in going through the locks, and after committing the deed Finn rode into Jersey City and surrendered himself to the police at the Bergen station. Coroner Mahon was notified, and last night an inquest was held at Library Hall, South Bergen, but was adjourned over to Friday without rendering a verdict. Finn is a married man, born in Ireland, about forty-two years old, and has four children. His wife and sister attended the inquest. Atno was unmarried, aged about twenty-four years, and lived at Rockaway, in Morris County.

Below is a picture of the view Eugene would have had as he approached the lock at the Hackensack River Bridge which is visible in the right background. Notice the large basin prior to the entrance of the lock which is also located on the right.



Dover's paper, *THE IRON ERA* Dover, Morris County, New Jersey, Sat., July 19, 1873, provided a detailed accounting of the incident to the family and residents of the Rockaway area. It also reveals the sorrow of Thomas Finn :

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Mr. Eugene Atno, a young man of Rockaway, was murdered on a bridge over the Hackensack River last Tuesday, while passing through with his canal boat. Mr. Atno was quite well known to this vicinity and was spoken of as being of good reputation, and quite worthy young man. He was a son of Mr. Jacob Atno, who resides near the foot of the canal plane at Rockaway. Elsewhere we publish a detailed account of the sad affair.

MURDER OF EUGENE ATNO

*A Fearful Fight on the Hackensack Bridge -
A Canal Boat Captain Murdered by the Ferry Master -
'I Wish Almighty God Would Lay Me Alongside Him.'*

Not even the swift terrors of ' Jersey Justice ' can control men's passions and prevent them from shedding each other's blood. Again was this truth fearfully demonstrated last Tuesday by a deadly display which took place on the plank road bridge over the Hackensack River, on the Hudson County side, and which resulted in murder. It appears that about three o'clock in the afternoon a number of canal boats were waiting to pass into the lock alongside the bridge, and a wordy wrangle took place between Captain Eugene Atno, of the Hugh Cassidy, and Thomas Finn, the Ferry Master long employed at that place. Atno wanted to get his boat through quickly, and in order to facilitate matters for his own boat and the others waiting, 'unhinged' or unloosened one end of a boat known as the 'crazy line craft,' and called for a bowline to be fastened to the other end. A boat captained by Joe Morgan entered the lock before the 'crazy line' boat had got out of the way, and Atno's maneuvers irritated Finn. Angry words were interchanged and both men clinched. A man named Dempsey, having an iron bar in his hand, ran up and tried to separate the combatants, but without success. Degraw saw the fight and ran up too, but just as he got to the men Atno staggered back and threw up his hands, and seemed to make a terrible effort to cry for help, but sank voiceless and almost pulseless at Degraw's feet. He died in about ten minutes time. Finn's fist did the work. No weapon whatever was used. One horrific blow to Atno's main neck cord had just the same affect as if the brain had been crushed or the heart pierced.

The dead man was carried into the murders house by Degraw, the house being right on the bridge. Finn realized at once the awful situation in which his mad passion had placed him. He wrung his hands and cried in tones of deep anguish, 'I wish God would lay me alongside him!' 'Oh' he added, 'if God will only spare me I will never raise my hand against mortal again!' Dr. Wilkinson, of Jersey City, arrived soon after, too late, however, to be of the slightest assistance, as Atno had ceased to live sometime before. Finn sprang into the doctor's wagon and went with him to Jersey City, and delivered himself too the officers of the fourth precinct.



Finn is a rather well-looking man, of about forty-two years of age. He has a wife and three of four children. The canal boat men, when asked what sort of man generally was he, hesitated to give a reply, and said that they would rather say nothing. One man remarked that, 'there was no use pouring water on a drowned rat.' Atno, the murdered man, was a fine strapping young fellow, from Rockaway, Morris County, N. J., quite respectably connected. He owned his own boat and was spoken of by his companions and fellow canallers in the most friendly and even affectionate terms. Fortunately, he leaves no family. He was about twenty-four years of age. His father is a well to do store keeper in Morris County. The body was removed last evening to Jersey City, where it was received by coronor John Mahan and the jury selected by Constable Langworthy. John Fogarty, Joseph Morgan, J. W. Elmmock, Patrick Moriarty, John Dempsey and John Degraw, all canallers present at the scene on the bridge, were taken into custody and held at the Fourth precinct as witnesses. The point of the bridge where the fatal affray took place is just a few rods over from the Essex county line, so that County Physician Dodd and Coronor Vreeland, of Newark are largely spared a most unpleasant duty.

THE CORONOR'S INQUIRY.

The inquisition by Coronor John Mahan into the circumstances of the death of Eugene Atno, who was murdered on the Hackensack bridge, by the ferry master on Tuesday afternoon, was continued in Liberty Hall on Wednesday evening. The post mortem examination of the physicians showed that death resulted from hemorrhage of the spinal column and brain. The neck was partially dislocated. Before the first witness was examined the entire room of the Police Court was densely crowded with friends of the prisoner, Finn. Only one friend of the unfortunate deceased was visible -- his cousin, who is a Morris County lawyer. The prisoner Finn is a stout, well built individual, with light brown hair and goatee. He is of a highly nervous temperament.

John Degraw, a boatman, swore -- I saw Atno come on what is called the crazy line boat and try to get his boat into the lock; the boat went through, and Atno went to the wharf and asked me to unhook the line, and I did so, letting my team stand; when I went to bring my team back I saw deceased and Finn wrangling; they soon clinched, and Finn struck Atno, who staggered and fell at my feet : I laid his head on my knee, thinking he was in a faint; he never spoke after falling.

Joseph Morgan, boatman, swore -- I saw the men wrangle, but could not tell what was the point of dispute; when they first came together Atno called Finn an Irish _____; Finn struck him on the side of the head; he struck him two or three times and gave the first blow; in falling Atno's head grazed a board; he had a piece on cinder in his head at the time, but I did not see him strike any blow; It was when Finn went after him that he picked up the coal; after the second blow Atno advanced towards Finn : I suppose Atno went on the lock to help put the crazy line boat through; his proper place, I presume was on his boat; after the last blow was struck Finn exclaimed, ' I think he's a dead man, and I wish God Almighty would kill me.'

After the testimony of Thomas Fogarty, an important witness, the inquest was adjourned until Friday.

Below is another view of the lock area looking east with the bridge over the Hackensack River to the left rear. Note the adjacent building which was the lock tender's house, as well as the one with the *Coca-Cola* sign. They all had weathered siding reflecting their extended use well into the early 20th century (picture was dated August 21, 1920). Also significant is the line of canal boats in the basin. This helps us envision the wait at the lock which Eugene attempted to move along!



The next picture is of the water wheel and pump house in Jersey City on the Hackensack River. Water was pumped from the river into the last eight miles of the canal, but obviously when ice didn't restrict the water wheel's operation.



Newspapers from Jersey City also had very detailed accounts of the incident due to their proximity to the crime. The first is from *The Evening Journal*, Wednesday July 16, & Saturday, July 19, 1873:

KILLING A MAN IN ANGER

A canal boat lockman slays a man with a blow of his fist - the murderer gives himself up.

Yesterday afternoon, at fifteen minutes past five o'clock, two boats approached the lock on the Morris canal, near the Hackensack Bridge, between Bergen and Newark. Both claimed the right to enter the lock first, but the Captains being friends, easily settled the dispute, and Captain Eugene Atno moved his boat forward, but was stopped by the lock tender named Thomas Finn. Atno and Finn had a few words - so few that none of the bystanders noticed them or can tell what they were - when Finn struck Atno a fearful blow back of his left ear. ...is the son of a wealthy merchant at Rockaway, Morris County, New Jersey. He left home early yesterday morning with a boat load of wood, consigned by his father to parties in Jersey City. Parties from Rockaway, who have known him from infancy, give him the name of being a very steady, quiet, young man, and one never known to engage in a quarrel with any one before. He was temperate in his habits, and but few young men in Morris County commanded more general respect of the community at large. For some months he had been engaged to one of the first young ladies in Rockaway, and the wedding was set down for the fore part of August. ...At the Fourth Precinct Station, Finn said to the officer in charge, 'Captain I had trouble with a man over at my lock, and the man is dead, and I want you to lock me up.' Coroner John Mahan, of Lafayette, ordered the body taken to William Speer's Morgue, on Crescent avenue, where Dr.'s Buck and Wilkinson held a post mortem examination this forenoon at nine o'clock, and found the cause of death to be according to the facts stated above. ...The father of the deceased was telegraphed for and with other relatives arrived at the Morgue at 10 o'clock this forenoon. The jury empaneled last evening viewed the remains, and the body has been turned over to the relatives, and will be removed to Rockaway this evening.

ANOTHER REPORT

Yesterday afternoon about three o'clock an affray occurred on the tow-path of the Morris canal, where that stream debouches into the Hackensack River. As is always the case, under favorable circumstances, a large number of canal boats were huddled together in the canal, at the mouth of the lock. Each Captain was in haste to get through, and took every advantage offered to affect that object, Eugene Atno, the Captain of the canal boat 'Hugh Cassidy,' unhinged his boat, which was in two sections, united by hinges in order that he might facilitate the passage through the lock. His actions made Thomas Finn, who ferries the boats over the river, and who is naturally of an irritable temperament, angry, and an altercation ensued. Atno a young wiry man, and not brooking certain opprobrious epithets applied to him by Finn, he leaped of his canal boat to the tow path and a tussle ensued. ...The unfortunate man staggered and fell. Not much attention was paid to the man, who laid perfectly still, and the business of the canal went on. After a while, as Atno did not move, Finn became frightened and turned the man over on his back. Then he saw something was wrong and hastily sent for Dr. Wilkinson. When Dr. Wilkinson arrived he pronounced Atno to be dead.

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His opinion is that apoplexy was caused by the sudden stoppage of blood, in the jugular, by the blow from Finn's fist. When it was ascertained that Atno was really dead, a scene of direst terror and confusion followed. Finn went almost crazy, and his wife and children wailed aloud in their anguish.

A numerous company of people participated in the excitement. ...Atno is said to be the son of Dr. J. P. Atno, of Rockaway, N. J. ...A jury was selected by Constable Langworthy as follows : Charles Keenan, Chas. Tier, Henry Dickenson, R. K. Gadd, John White, John R. Jackson, Thomas Kerwin, Abram. P. Bush, William Hughes, J. C. Wesrendell, Enos Pyle, and Richard Billings. ... John Fogarty, Joseph Morgan, J. W. Dimmook, Patrick Moriarty, John Dempsey and John Degraw, all canallers, present at the scene on the bridge were taken into custody and held at the Fourth precinct as witnesses.

Saturday, July 19, 1873.

The Murder on the Canal

The jury at the Library Hall inquest last night, after being locked up an hour, during which time the McWilliams trial was thoroughly discussed, arrived at the conclusion that, 'Eugene Atno came to his death by a blow from the fist of Thomas Finn,' and thus their verdict was rendered.

Below is another picture of the lock looking westward. It shows the basin but offers an up close view of the gear which raised and lowered the drop gate, as well as those which controlled water going through the bypass flume. Notice the typically narrow lock, which could accept only one boat at a time, helping create the traffic back up noted in the newspaper accounts. Today's travelers experience the same circumstances when highways merge to fewer lanes, which at times contributes to 'road rage.' Eugene's patience was clearly tested that day - July 16, 1973 at about three in the afternoon, as he thought about the last few miles until his journey's end in Jersey City. Little did he know that his zealous drive in expediting that goal would bring about the tragic result - 'canal rage' !



THE AMERICAN STANDARD, Jersey City, N. J., Wed., July 16, Thurs., July 17, and Sat., July 19, 1873 depict even more details as well as the area's struggle with other similar events, which may account for the intense reporting. Note the testimony given by one of Finn's friends Mr. Demick in the Sat. article.

DEATH IN THE AIR.

Murder Becoming A Chronic Disease.

An Angry Lock-tender Kills a Canal Boatman with a Blow of His Fist.

Following close upon the murder of Deputy Marshal Stephenson came the almost murder of Saturday night at the 'Crows Nest,' and now that later horror is supplemented by still another homicide which occurred yesterday at the bridge of the Newark Plank Road, across the Hackensack, where the Morris Canal has its outlet. The murdered man was Eugene Atno, and the murderer is Thomas Finn, the 'ferrymaster,' as he is sometimes called, but who is in reality the lockmaster of the canal. From statements made to the police by John Degraw, who witnessed the affray, it appears that about three o'clock in the afternoon a number of canal boats were waiting to pass into the lock alongside the bridge. As a matter of course all wanted to by first and Atno, who was in command of the boat called 'Hugh Cassidy,' undertook to facilitate matters for his own craft and others lying near by unloosing one end of a boat called the 'crazy line craft,' and fastening a bowline to the other end. A boat commanded by Joseph Morgan entered the lock before the 'crazy line' boat had got out of the way and Atno's maneuvers to gain precedence irritated Finn, the lockmaster. Angry words were interchanged and finally both men clinched. ...Finn had no weapon whatever in his hand and Atno was killed by a terrific blow with his fist, which took affect on the cords of his throat. ... Atno breathed his last some time before - probably before the messenger left the scene of the tragedy. ...The canal boatman, when asked what sort of man he generally was, hesitated to give a reply,.... One man remarked that there was 'no use in pouring water on a drowned rat.' Atno the murdered man, was a fine, strapping young fellow, from Rockaway Plains, Morris County, quite respectably connected. He owned his own boat and was spoken of by his companions and fellow canallers in the most friendly and affectionate terms. Fortunately he leaves no family. ...His father is a well to do store keeper in Morristown.

Thursday, July 17, 1873
THE UNINTENTIONAL HOMICIDE

Commencement of the Coronor's Investigation --- Bergan's Curiosity Seekers --- Remorse of the Prisoner.

A large crowd of the idle curiosity seekers gather about Library Hall last evening and besieged every entrance to the building long before the time arrived for opening the doors. ...Shortly before eight o'clock Coronor Mahan arrived and proceeded to the police court room followed by Constable Langworthy and the jury that had been empaneled. They made their way through the crowd only with the utmost difficulty, and the last juror had scarcely entered the door when a rush was made by the curiosity seekers, and in a few minutes the room was crowded to suffocation. Some were balancing themselves on the window sills while others essayed the athletic feat of climbing on their neighbor's shoulders, while all indulged in

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loud and boisterous talking and laughing interlaced with yells and cat calls from those on the outside who were unable to gain admittance. One would think from the great disorder that prevailed that it was a prize fight or cocking main the people had come to see. The wife, brother and sister of the prisoner were present and appeared to be very much distressed, particularly the

The prisoner himself was brought up from the cells and placed in a chair at the reporter's table by the side of his counsel, Norman L. Rowe, Esq. He is a medium sized thickset man with reddish brown hair and a red goatee. He was dressed in a white linen coat, light mixed pants and white shirt. His countenance, which is mild and pleasant looking, betrayed the anguish of mind that he felt in consequence of the unfortunate occurrence that sent a fellow-being to eternity and placed himself in the prisoner's lock. Francis R. Atno, a lawyer from Morris County and as well a cousin of the deceased, was also present and occupied himself in taking notes of the testimony. Job Lippincort, Esq., represented District Attorney Garretson for the State. County Physician Buck, assisted by Drs. Wilkinson and Carpenter, made a very thorough post-mortem examination yesterday eighteen hours after the death of the deceased. On the external surface they found only a slight abrasure of the left ear. They then opened the head, chest abdomen and found all the organs of the chest and abdomen in a healthy condition. The skull was unusually thin especially over the temple and occipital regions. A small amount of bloody ceromen was found in the left ventricle of the brain. Large clots of blood were found on the cerebellum under the falx cerebri and on the medulla oblongata. One of the lateral ligaments connecting the atlas with the first cervical vertebra was found to be ruptured. On the left side there was partial luxation of the vertebra, and a rupture of the vein passing along the spinal cord under the ruptured ligaments. The piamata was found in a very ruptured state, and the neck was partially dislocated. Death was caused by hemorrhage on the medulla, which is one of the connecting links between the spinal column and the brain.

When everything was ready, Coronor Mahan reduced the noisy crowd in something like order, and then the inquest commenced.

John Degraw was the first witness sworn. He testified; I am a boatman, and reside at Rockaway, Morris County, my boat came across the river, Atno came on what they call the crazy line, and tried to get her in the lock, he unhinged one side, and then got a bowline to prevent the hinges from breaking apart, the boat went through the lock, the next boat that went through was Mr. Morgan's. Atno went on the wharf and called to me to unhook the line, I did so, leaving my team standing, the horses turned around and started back across the bridge again, in the meantime Atno and Finn were wrangling, but I paid no attention to it, I went to bring my team back, and when I got to the horses the two men were in a clinch on the other side of the lock, I ran over to part them but another man passed me and went between them, but before he got there I saw the prisoner strike Atno one blow, I did not see anything in Finn's hand, Atno staggered and fell down at my feet, I thought he was in a faint, I picked him up and laid his head on my knee, somebody brought water, there was a bruise on his ear and it turned black immediately, the occurrence took place about two o'clock in the afternoon, Atno never spoke after he fell, I don't think Atno had been drinking, I am employed by Jacob Atno, the deceased was the son of my employer and was also the captain of the boat.

Joseph Morgan testified; I am a boatman employed in boat No. 1717, I reside in my boat, I was at the lock when the occurrence took place, I heard the two men wrangling, but could not tell what it was about, I was on the other side of the boat from them, I saw the prisoner strike Atno and he

sagged down slowly, when they first came together Atno called Finn an 'Irish s__ of a b____,' Finn struck Atno two or three times at first they did not seem to get very much excited, Atno fell down like a man in a fit, his head just grazed a board that was there, Finn struck the first blow, Atno had a piece of cinder in his hand, I did not see him strike any blow, but he put up his hands, when the wrangling first commenced the men were a couple of rods apart, Finn went after Atno and that was the time that Atno picked up the coal, I think after the second blow Atno went towards Finn, I don't think his head hit the board when he fell, it might have grazed it, I suppose Atno should have remained in his boat, that was his proper place, I suppose he went on the lock to help get the crazy line boat through, I think it was the back of Atno's head that struck the side of the board, I think Atno was sober, the last blow struck him just behind the ear, after the last blow was struck Finn said, 'I think he is a dead man and I wish God Almighty would kill me !'

Thomas Fogarty was the next witness. He saw something of the occurrence but was not positive about anything.

Saturday, July 19 1873
THE UNINTENTIONAL HOMICIDE

The Investigation Concluded - Testimony of Medical Experts - Verdict of the Jury

Coroner Mahan's investigation of th cause of death in the case of Eugene Atno, was resumed last evening at the Library Hall Police Court. The same noisy and disorderly crowd that was in attendance on the first evening was present again last night, but they were kept tolerably quiet by an officer detailed by Captain Benson for that purpose at the Coroner's request. The wife, brother and sister of the prisoner, and his little child, a boy about three years of age, were in attendance. Counselors Rowe and Lippencort devoted a great deal of attention to cross-examining the witnesses, thereby prolonging the investigation to a late hour. The first witness called was :

John W. Dimick, who testified: 'I am a landscape gardener, and reside at the corner of Putnam and Bright streets; last Tuesday afternoon I was at the Hackensack bridge, between three and four o'clock; I was sitting in Mr. Finn's house, he came in and talked with me a few minutes; he then went out to help lock through some boats; some two or three minutes afterwards I heard some words at the lock; I heard Finn say, 'Go back to your boat, and when it comes your turn you can come into the lock and have something to say;' Atno replied, 'You dammed Irish _____, I won't go back for you, and you can't make me run;' Finn either said, 'I'll make you go back,' or 'you shall go back;' then they both started towards each other, as I supposed for a little scuffle, for there had been words enough to create much of a row; when they started they were about a rod apart; they met halfway; Atno placed himself in a fighting position and made a blow at Finn which the later warded off; I then saw blood on Atno's lip; Atno stepped back about four or five feet and again came towards Finn; Finn struck him in the face with the flat of his hand, as I took it; Atno then stepped back about eight feet and stooping down picked up a piece of coal which had been burned. He then advanced toward Finn and the later made a blow hit him without striking him; Atno stooped over and Finn struck him in the face; Atno then raised up, and as he did so staggered back about three or four feet and then came at Finn again; Finn then struck him in the face with his fist or hand, I couldn't tell which; that was the last blow I saw struck; Atno wheeled half way round to the left, and staggered about six feet and seemed as if

about to fall, but recovered himself; Mr. Dempsey then stepped between them and putting his hand on Finn's breast, said, 'Tom, don't strike any more for you are not going to fight;' Finn did not reply, but turned around as if to walk away; Atno walked about eight feet towards a piece of plank or timber along the side of the canal; I heard him murmur something, it sounded to me as if he said, 'God d__n you;' he then stooped down to pick up his hat, or was raising after picking it up, when he fell, striking the left side of his head on the timber plank; I heard the blow when his head struck; I heard it plainly where I was sitting; Mr. Degraw stepped up as Atno fell to prevent him tumbling into the canal; he took hold of Atno and carried him back about ten or twelve feet; he put him down and a crowd gathered around, so that Atno was concealed from my view; I told them it would be better to bring him out of the hot sun under shelter; they brought him into Finn's house and laid him down on the floor; I stepped up, and taking hold of his left arm, placed my finger on his pulse and found it very strong at that time; placing my other hand over his heart at the same time, I found it beating violently;

I then noticed a mark in the lower part of his left ear, which looks as if it had been made by something harder than a man's fist; I said to Degraw, 'I guess he has only fainted, I guess he will come to;' Finn said, 'No, I am afraid he will die, and I would that God would lay me alongside of him; If He will only spare my life, I will never raise my hand to mortals again;' the distance from where Atno fell to where I was sitting was just sixty feet; about a minute elapsed from the striking of the last blow until Atno fell; after the blow he walked upright until just before he fell, and after he fell, I believe he moved his head; I heard him murmur after he fell, but couldn't say positively that he said anything after they carried him into the house; I saw him wink once or twice.'

The witness was closely cross-examined, but without altering his testimony.

County Physician Buck was next sworn and testified, 'I am County Physician of Hudson County; I made a post mortem examination of the body of Eugene Atno about eighteen hours after death; I was assisted by ...'

Witness here read the result of the examination as already published exclusively in the STANDARD. He continued.

'The immediate cause of death were the ruptured vein and the hemorrhage; a blow would produce them; it is remarkable that such serious effect could be produced by such a blow, but it is possible; if the man spoke after the blow, I should suppose that death was produced by the fall; I think it scarcely possible that he could have murmured, a hemorrhage on the medulla oblongata would produce almost instantaneous death; I hardly suppose a blow from a man's fist would produce the abrasure of the skin found on the left ear.'

Doctors Wilkinson and Carpenter concurred in the results of the post mortem examination, as stated by Dr. Buck. They were cross-examined at considerable length by the lawyers as to whether the death of the deceased was caused by the blow or the fall, and both inclined to the opinion that it was the result of the blow, although they admitted that if the man in falling struck his head on the edge of the plank the same effect would be produced. Two additional witnesses John Dempsey and Patrick Merrity, were examined, but nothing new was elicited by their testimony. At about half-past ten o'clock Coronor Mahan charged the jury briefly, and they were placed in charge of Constable Langworthy and locked up. After an absence of forty-five minutes they returned with a verdict that the deceased came to his death from a blow or blows inflicted by the hands of Thomas Finn. An effort will be made today to have the prisoner admitted to bail.

The Jersey City Herald, July 19, 1873 stated the two most important points with
about this incident :

--Eugene Atno, captain of a canal boat, and a son of Jacob Atno, a merchant in Rockaway, Morris County, this State, fell dead on Tuesday afternoon from the blow of a fist, struck under the ear, by a man named Thomas Finn, ... Whereupon Finn struck Atno, with the result above stated, it is fair to believe that from Finn's manifestation of grief and his voluntary surrender, he had no intention of killing the man. He is now in Jail. Atno was about 25, and it is said engaged to be married to an accomplished lady of Morris County.

The site of the 'affray' between Eugene and Thomas was the exact pier in the picture below. The lock tender's house where Eugene died that late afternoon of July 16, 1873, is also clearly present with its fresh coat of white wash. The view looking west at Lock 21 East in Jersey City, which was about 9 mi. from the canal's eastern terminus, and about 42 mi. from Eugene's home in Rockaway.

It is kind of *chilling* to have pictures to bring to life that event! Two points are of particular interest. The first is the sign next to the lock. It indicates the trickiness of the navigation in the Hackensack River, which associated with a busy lock and an easily triggered temper spelled disaster that fateful July. If you look closely you'll also see the lock tender sitting on his porch during one of the infrequent times when the lock was not very active! Given the white wash on the house, this is clearly an early picture, and I wonder about his identity. Could it be



The *True Democratic Banner*, Morristown, N. J., Thurs., July 24, 1873 leaves us with only a sense of the consequences for Thomas Finn :

State Items.

The jury in the case of Eugene Atno, ... has returned a verdict, ' that Eugene Atno came to his death from the fist of Thomas Finn.' Finn is still held, the Coroner awaiting the advice of the Prosecuting Attorney before admitting him to bail.

There was no further documentation on Thomas Finn's fate. He surely experienced some kind of consequences along with those that his wife and children must have endured. Census data also did not offer a sense of his later whereabouts.

The final picture, although from the early 20th century, shows the eastern terminus of the Morris Canal in Jersey City. The New York skyline is in the background. Somewhere close by on July 16, 1873 was a patron waiting for a canal boat of wood carried by *Captain Eugene Atno* of the *Hugh Cassidy*. By the enormity of the event, he probably heard by word of mouth that its arrival would be indefinitely delayed !



CAPTAINS ARE FORBIDDEN
TO LOAD THEIR BOATS ONT
TO THE RIVER UNTIL
UNDER CHARGE OF AN
OFFICER OF THE
NAVY.

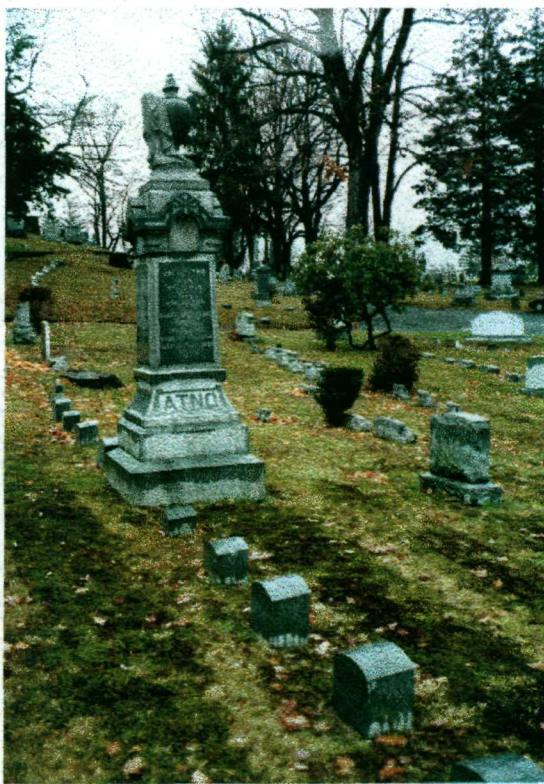
The emotional impact for me while researching the Atno's prosperity and misfortune was powerful. Especially, when I visualized Eugene's fiancée, parents and friends dressed in black gathered around his grave. He was buried about two blocks from his childhood home in what later became the ATNO family plot in the cemetery of the 1st. Presbyterian Church of Rockaway. His siblings and parents were also later laid to rest there. Their graves are marked by a beautiful monument as seen below.

If Eugene had lived or his sisters and brother had married, I would have likely not researched this family line at this time, since their parents' portrait would have been passed on through to their children. Instead it became part of the Casterlin connections to the past and an itch I had to scratch !

Jacob d. July 6, 1886 at 66 years old - 2 months after a stroke
Nancy Elizabeth d. September 27, 1895 at 81 years old - 3 weeks after a stroke

James Atno a Saloon Keeper d. March 21, 1900 at 57 years old at home 34 Union St.
Evaline d. March 10 1927 at 84 years old on Jackson Ave.
Pheobe d. July 19, 1930 at 77 years old at home 34 Union St.
Isabella d. January 31, 1935 at 78 years old at home 34 Union St.

The family's home at 34 Union St. later came into the possession of John G the son of Sarah E. (Atno) Gill. He lost it in a Sheriff's Sale in 1935. The canal store remains as such to this day, housing a stained glass art shop.



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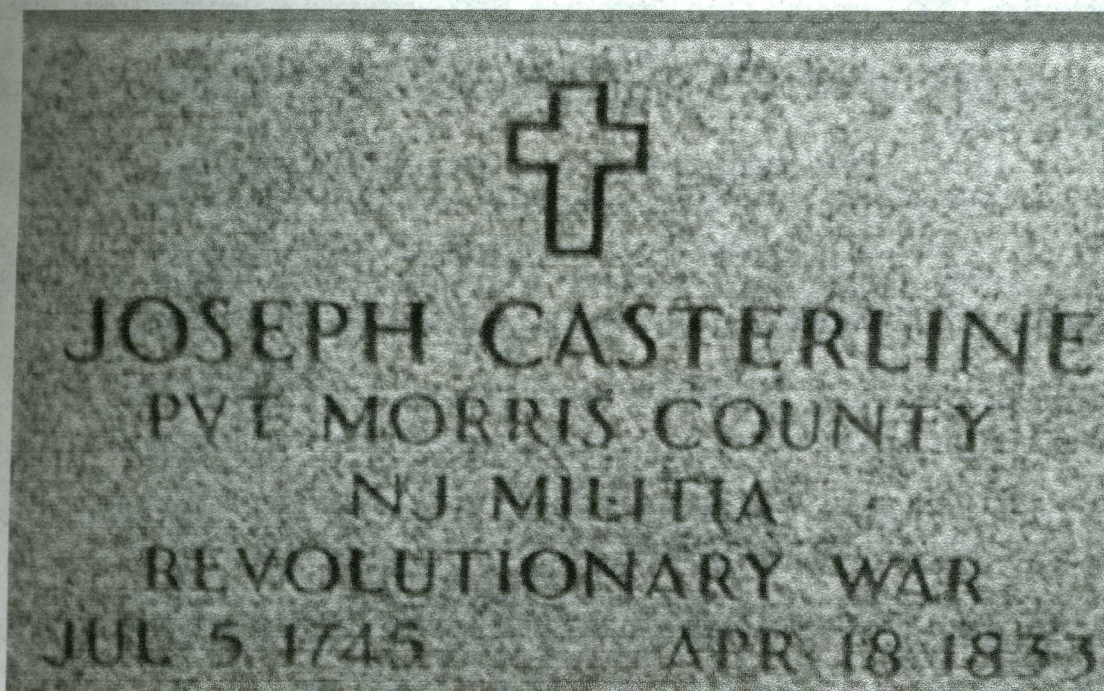
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ession of John Gil
35. The canal store

TRIBUTE

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Also located about 50 feet from the Atno's Family Plot is the grave marker honoring the Revolutionary Service of Joseph Casterline from Union Hill. He was Nancy Elizabeth's grandfather, Eugene's great grandfather and my gggg - grandfather. May his soul rest in peace !



Joseph served for 18 months over a five year period from 1776 - 1780. His tours of duty included engagement in the Battle of Ashswamp, the taking of Hessian soldiers prisoner at Elizabethtown, the removal of enemy stores captured on Long Island, and the guarding of P O W's at the Morristown Jail.

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07823